

HALF-SILENT FELLOWSHIPS

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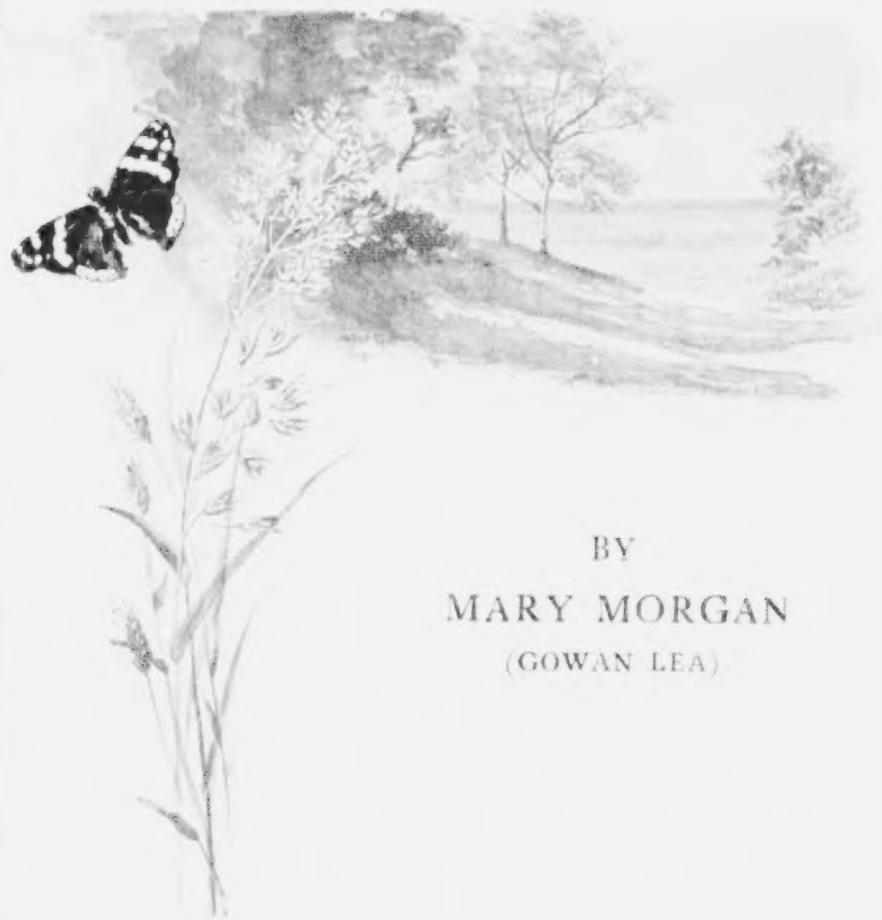
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HALF-SILENT FELLOWSHIPS



BY
MARY MORGAN
(GOWAN LEA)

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L'ENVOI

THREE are days when the heavens are grey ; no freshening breeze to invigorate ; nor a morning star to awaken hope : earth seems desolate, gloomy, silent.

This aspect of Nature has its counterpart in the spirit of man. At such a time one recalls the words of St. Francis de Sales: "I have sought repose everywhere, and have only found it in a quiet corner with a little book."

In a grey mood of the spirit, following the example of St. Francis de Sales, might it not be helpful for us betimes to carry a little book in the vest-pocket—anything that appealed to the fancy of the moment—and to wander away out into the country somewhere, anywhere. The book may never be opened, but there is a satis-

L'ENVOI

tion in knowing that the mind has somewhat to fall back upon. In any case, there is the unbounded Book of Nature before us, and all that we require is to abandon ourselves to its infinite inspirations, and to rejoice in its ever-changing, manifold, silent or half-silent fellowships, which it offers with unstinted measure.

The Greeks wisely gave as much attention to the right employment of leisure as to the hours of business. It is in our free moments that we are frequently led to discover our vocation. The greatest incentive to labour is a love of the work. Worries crop up on every path, but, in the pursuit of what interests him, a man may escape the worst worry of all, *i.e.*, that of wondering what on earth he was called into existence for. Let him step out of his groove into the open, where the serenity of the rustic nooks will invite him to consider seriously what life means to him—what he can do. Let him give rein to his imagination nor fear its farthest flight.

L'ENVOI

As it soars, his intelligence will find a wider outlook, and therein lies his chance of progress. All fetters are bad. Said Ingersoll, "O Liberty, float not for ever in the dream of the enthusiast, the philanthropist, and poet, but come and make thy home among the children of men."

A plea then for the hours of seeming idleness, that they may be esteemed all-important, as giving each an opportunity to arrive at his independent thought. Surely there is lack of wisdom in attempting to dictate to another what course he shall follow. Must we not all sympathize with the Scotchman who, on a certain occasion, heard an evangelical preacher shouting to his audience: "All who mean to go to heaven with me, stand up!" Noticing that one man stolidly kept his seat, the speaker pointed to him and cried: "Don't you want to go to heaven?" "I'm gangin,'" replied the Scot, deliberately, "but no' wi' a pairsonally-conducted party!"

Some may think that in the following

L'ENVOI

pages there is an occasional divergence from the main line of thought by the introduction of extraneous matter. When one is "Sur la Branche," as the French say, a little latitude is perhaps pardonable. Moreover the novelist, Thomas Hardy, expresses his opinion touching what he terms "Unadjusted impressions" in these words: "They have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance or change." M. M.

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THE SEASONS

A

“ To the solid ground of Nature
Trusts the mind that builds for aye.”

WORDSWORTH.

I

WHAT is the song of the Spring ?
Life whispering through Death.
Sauntering through the fields to-day one
feels the joy that ever comes with the
sight of the first flowers—the snowdrops,
crocuses, anemones — whilst here and
there among the long grass the daffodils
flutter in the breeze, lookir ^{just as} though a flight of canaries had alighted.
How rapidly Nature works ! we exclaim.
For many months we had forgotten that
she was working at all : so prone are we to
think that nothing is doing which our eyes
do not see. Could we but look below the
surface, what a revelation !

Watch the growth of the plants in the
window. Notice the hyacinth bulbs in
water, how the roots seek the earth while
the leaves point skyward—a type of

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human growth ; for whilst our bodies are asking bread, our minds are demanding another kind of aliment.

The investigations of the scientist to-day favour the poet's assertion, " And 'tis my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes." At the recent meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Mr Francis Darwin said :—

" It is impossible to know whether or not plants are conscious ; but it is consistent with the doctrine of continuity, that in all living things there is something psychic ; and if we accept this point of view, we must believe that in plants there exists a faint copy of what we know as consciousness in ourselves."

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“ Peace, splendour, boundless space ! . . . I long to catch the wild bird, happiness, and tame it. These mornings impress me indescribably. They intoxicate me, they carry me away. I feel beguiled out of myself, dissolved in sunbeams, breezes, perfumes, and sudden impulses of joy. And yet all the time I pine for I know not what intangible Eden.” — *Amiel writing of Summer Mornings.*

A SUMMER morning dawns when the rustling trees seem to be calling on us to wander in the cool shade of the forest. Above the pines, the blue sky is shining. The cicada is heard in the thicket, and the squirrels are playing hide-and-go-seek in the branches. Happy, too, the birds, singing for very joy, without fear of molestation. The soft green moss with the sunlight falling upon it in the open spaces, makes such a fairylike picture that one expects to see the dryads come dancing out of the sylvan glade. Sit down then, tired wanderer ; build your *châteaux en Espagne* ; trust the companionship of the woods, which exalts and never betrays.

In the atmosphere of sunny warmth how the insects emerge from the shelter

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of their hiding-places, and revel in the brightness of the summer day !

In this connection, does it not occur to us, that we human beings have various planes for our activity to which each of us, according to his endowment, is more or less consciously alive. Take, for example, the atmosphere of genial society, which calls out our benevolent feelings ; the musical atmosphere which awakens the emotions ; the intellectual, which requires the reasoning powers ; the artistic, the poetic, etc., etc. As we to a certain extent can choose our own plane, so, obviously, we have a hand in our own making. Along his path of progress therefore, man may reasonably expect to discover joys at present unknown to him, and even undreamed.

The companionship of flowers is worth cultivating. To walk in the summer gardens and admire the varied bloom, is a joy common to all, but for a real enthusiasm for the loveliness of plant-life, you

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must go to him who has lived among flowers and observed them, who has watched the gradual unfolding of the leaf, has seen the pale, delicate, shell-like tints of the rose deepen to the richest hue. His interest in a flower is like that of an artist for a picture. It is the outcome of knowledge and education, and a love of the beautiful.

“One Autumn day in those grandly fading woods. . . . And the wind—no, there was no wind—there was only a memory of wind that woke now and then in the bosom of the wood, shook down a few leaves, like the thoughts that flutter away in sighs, and then was still again.”

GEO. MACDONALD.

III

HOW rich is the Autumn colouring, and what solemn thoughts the changing leaf suggests to our reveries ! Withered foliage hides our pathways, and the light of the sun grows cold. The wind sobs among the willows, whose leaves are dropping like tears on the stream below. Over the woodlands there falls a white veil of mist, as though the trees were in a sort of dreamland. There is a deep pathos about it all.

To fade is as natural as to flower, and the two go hand in hand, so that we cannot think them apart.

In compensation for the shortening day, we have the lengthening evening, and the blazing logs on the hearth have a psychic effect upon us. The moon is shining on the window, and the firmament glitters with

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myriads of stars. Betimes comes the sound of the swaying poplars as they whisper their secrets to each other. This is the time for peace and refreshment. "I often think," writes Bulwer Lytton, "that we do not sufficiently cultivate the friendship of Night. We separate the night by too sharp a line from the day. We close her out from us by shutters and curtains, and reject her stars for our lamps. Now, since I have lived here in the country, I have learned that Night is a much more sociable companion than I before suspected. In Summer I often ride out, even in Winter often ramble forth, when my guests have been for hours in their beds. I take into my day impartially all the twenty-four hours. There are trains of thought set in motion by the sight of the stars which are dormant in the glare of the sun. And without such thoughts, man's thinking is incomplete."

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“ The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? ”

SHELLEY.

THE waning moon of December! Clear and cold and silent : not the twitter of a bird to be heard. Earth is clad in a robe of purest white, and the trees stand like ghosts in their delicate drapery. A poem without words ! The snow has a beauty all its own. Softly and quietly it falls upon the window-pane, and then as the noon-day approaches and the sun shines warm, how miraculously it disappears to mingle with the other elements !

But soon the victory of light over darkness, of day over night, makes itself felt. Although in the midst of snow, we have a foretaste of Spring. We are bidding adieu to the Past, and good-morrow to the Future. The mind faces both ways. And, as in every farewell, there is the sting of sadness, so over every untried

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path there arises the star of Hope—immortal star, which man always looks for in the To-morrow.

“ Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past.
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven by a dome more vast ;
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea ! ”

THE SEA



“ Run home, little streams,
With your laps full of stars,
And of dreams.” —LANIER.



WHOEVER has watched the long line of tremendous waves roll in on the coast of Biarritz, and not felt the sublimity of Nature, as voiced by the sea? There is somewhat that speaks of infinite force in the immensity of ocean, and when in its stormy mood the surf comes dashing on the bare rocks, and is sent ever so high up in air, one is filled with wonder at the magnificence of the spectacle!

The unresting sea! Yet how restful it is to sit by it, and listen to its ebb and flow. An eminent physician says that to linger by the sea-shore for an hour every day is a potent restorer for tired nerves and weary spirits. There is somewhat in the rhythm of the waters that leads us to wonder. To wonder is to imagine; to imagine is to have wings; to have wings is to surmount material barriers and to

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find freedom and serenity. The melody of the waves—an unfinished symphony—is a lullaby that soothes to sleep worldly cares. Then doth the soul awake to know how trifling, infinitesimal, are the thorns that beset man's daily path, compared with the sublimity of *being* hinted at by the ever-moving sea.

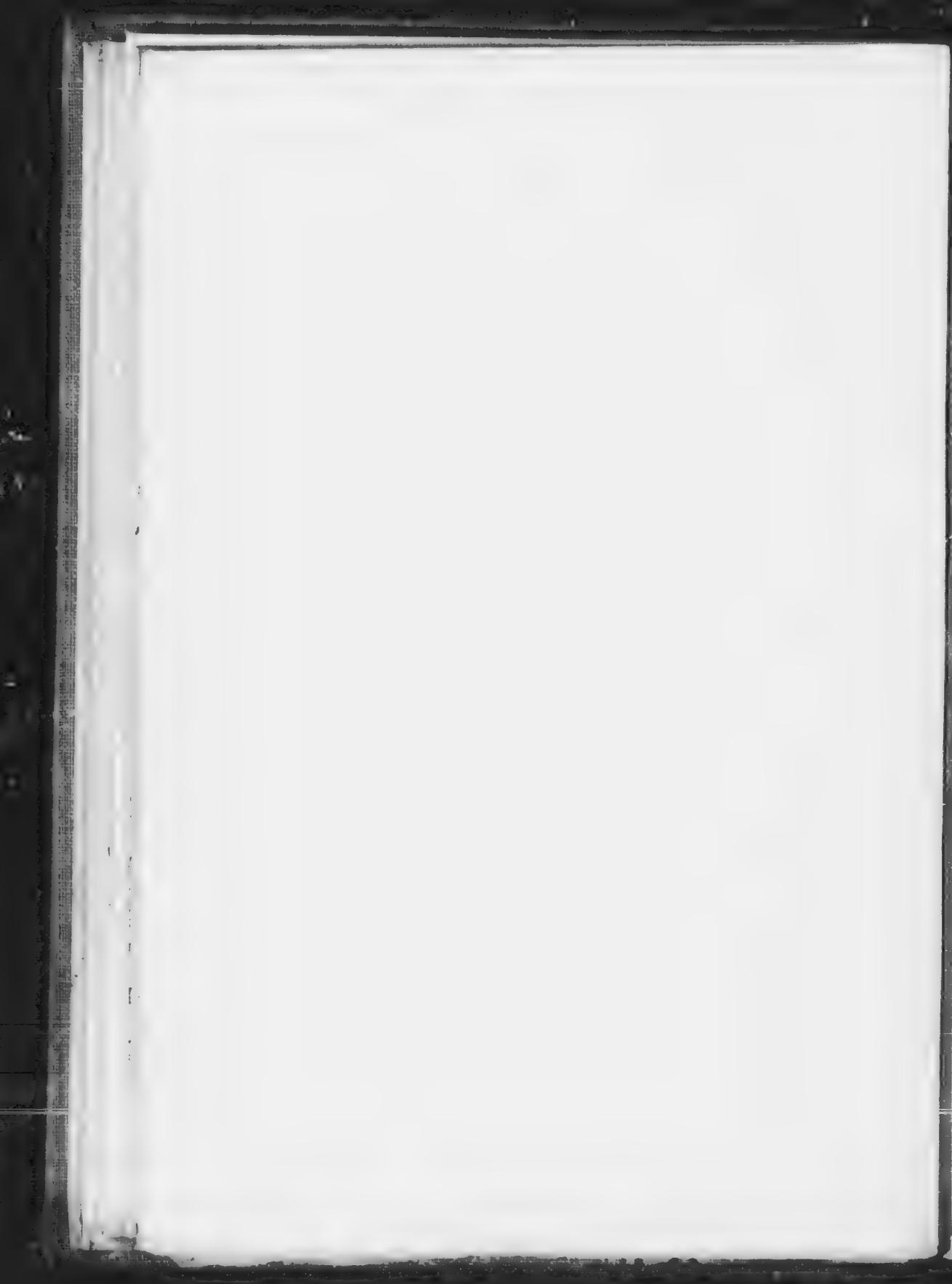
Roll on dark ocean, inexhaustible, mysterious, the soul feels thy kinship. Ever dost thou seem to be saying, and never to have said. In the far horizon the ships go by ; near to shore the gulls hover up and down. All is movement, all is harmony.

Seated one day on the sands close by Tennyson's house at Freshwater, the poet's pathetic little lyric—

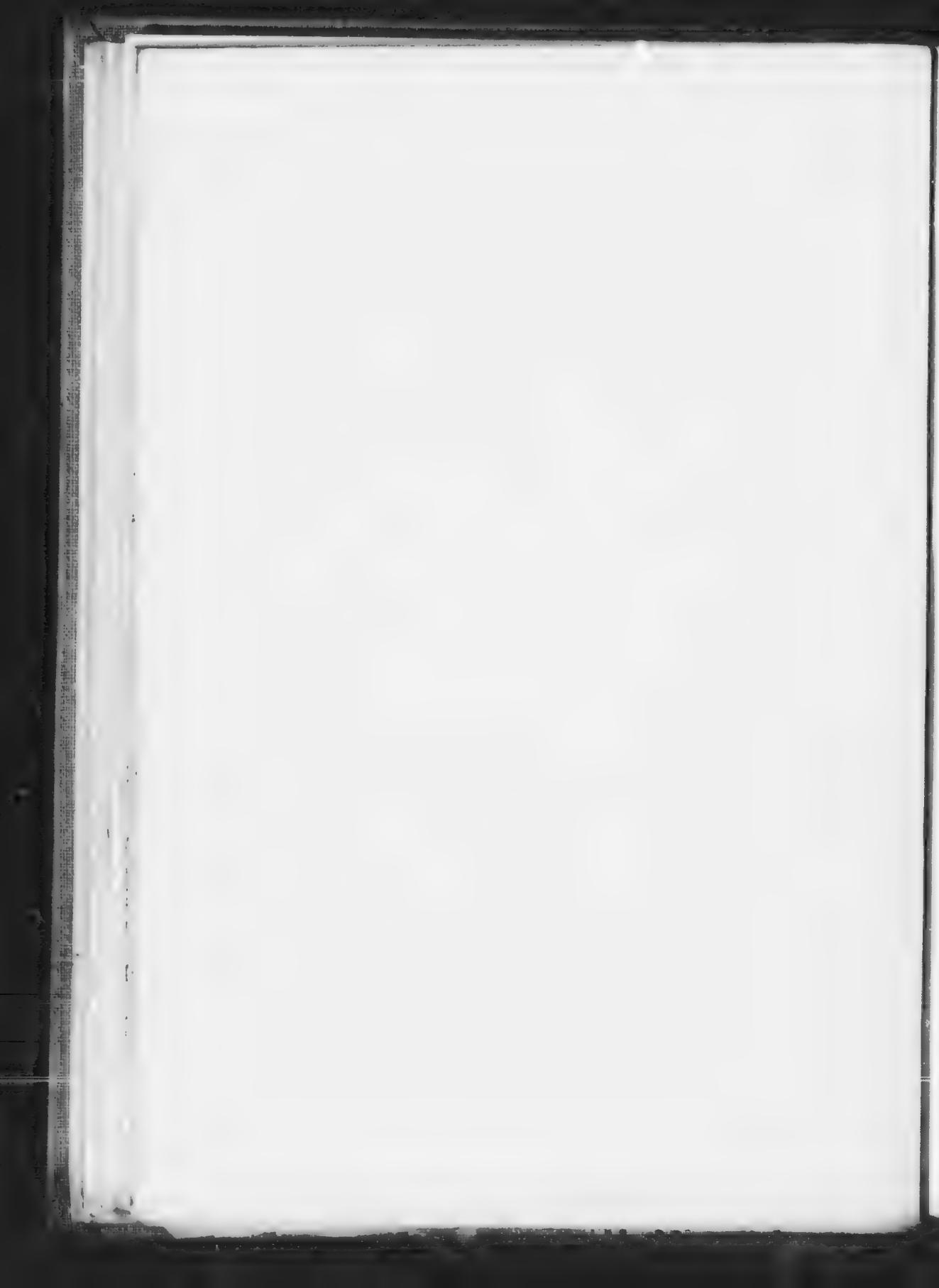
“ Break, break, break, on thy cold grey stones, O sea,” etc.,

kept recurring to me as though it filled the air ; it seemed a child of the spot—so fitly do the lines suit the surroundings.

THE POET: THE ARTS



“ And the countless leaves of the pine are strings
Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.
Harken ! hearken ! ”



I

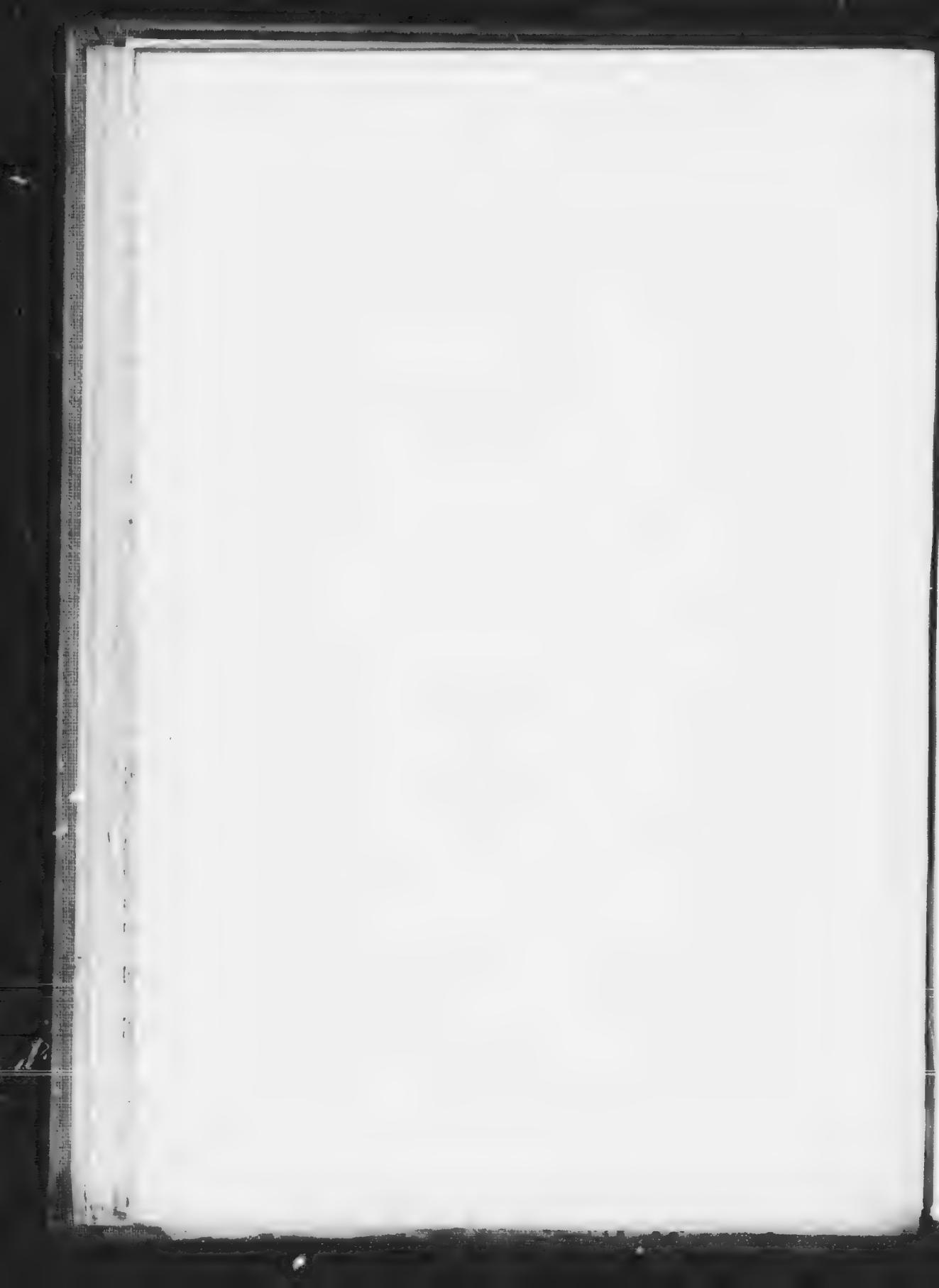
THE god of the wood is the poet ; and the poets are our leaders, our inspirers. Their attitude toward the universe and all therein is one of tenderness. From them we learn charity, resignation, aspiration. They are endowed with that far-off glance into things—that glance prophetic—which accompanies the mind that questions and hopes. They are not dogmatic, they are suggestive. They believe with Emerson that “Commerce is a game of skill which every man cannot play.” They do not crave material possessions, but are happy to be out of the glare of ostentation with congenial souls, inspiring books, and ennobling fellowships. They hear sweet music in the voices of the trees, and for them the sunlight and the starlight have an undying charm. They know that “On the heights

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thereliesrepose"—that repose which alone is worth striving for. They are born with the intuition that to climb is the law of life, and that

“ He only earns his freedom and existence
Who daily conquers them anew.”

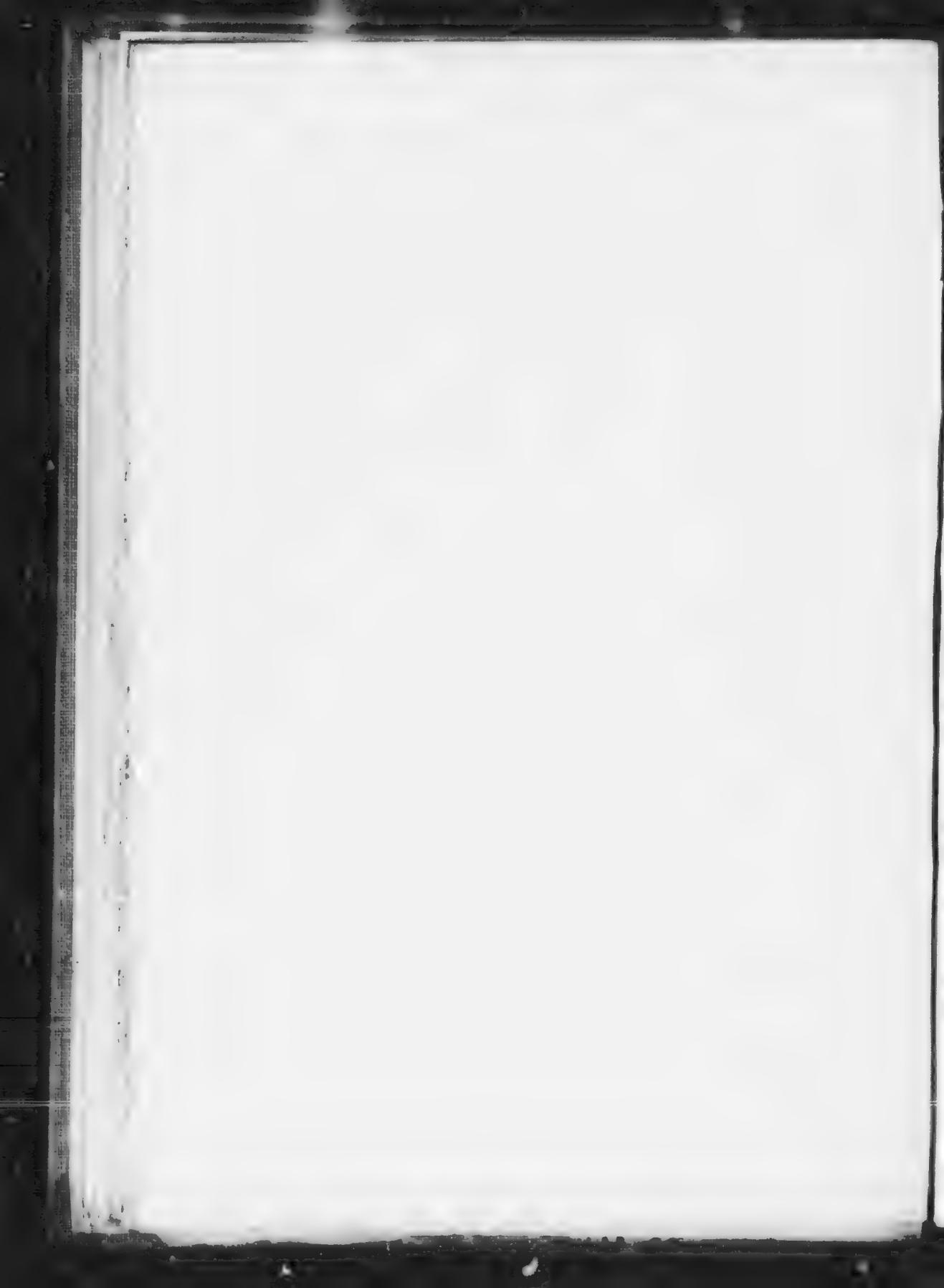
“What is music?” Heine writes. “This question occupied my mind for hours last night before I fell asleep. The very existence of music is wonderful ; I might even say miraculous. Its domain is between thought and phenomena. Like a twilight mediator it hovers between spirit and matter, related to both, yet differing from each ; it is spirit, but spirit subject to the measurement of time ; it is matter, but matter that can dispense with space.”



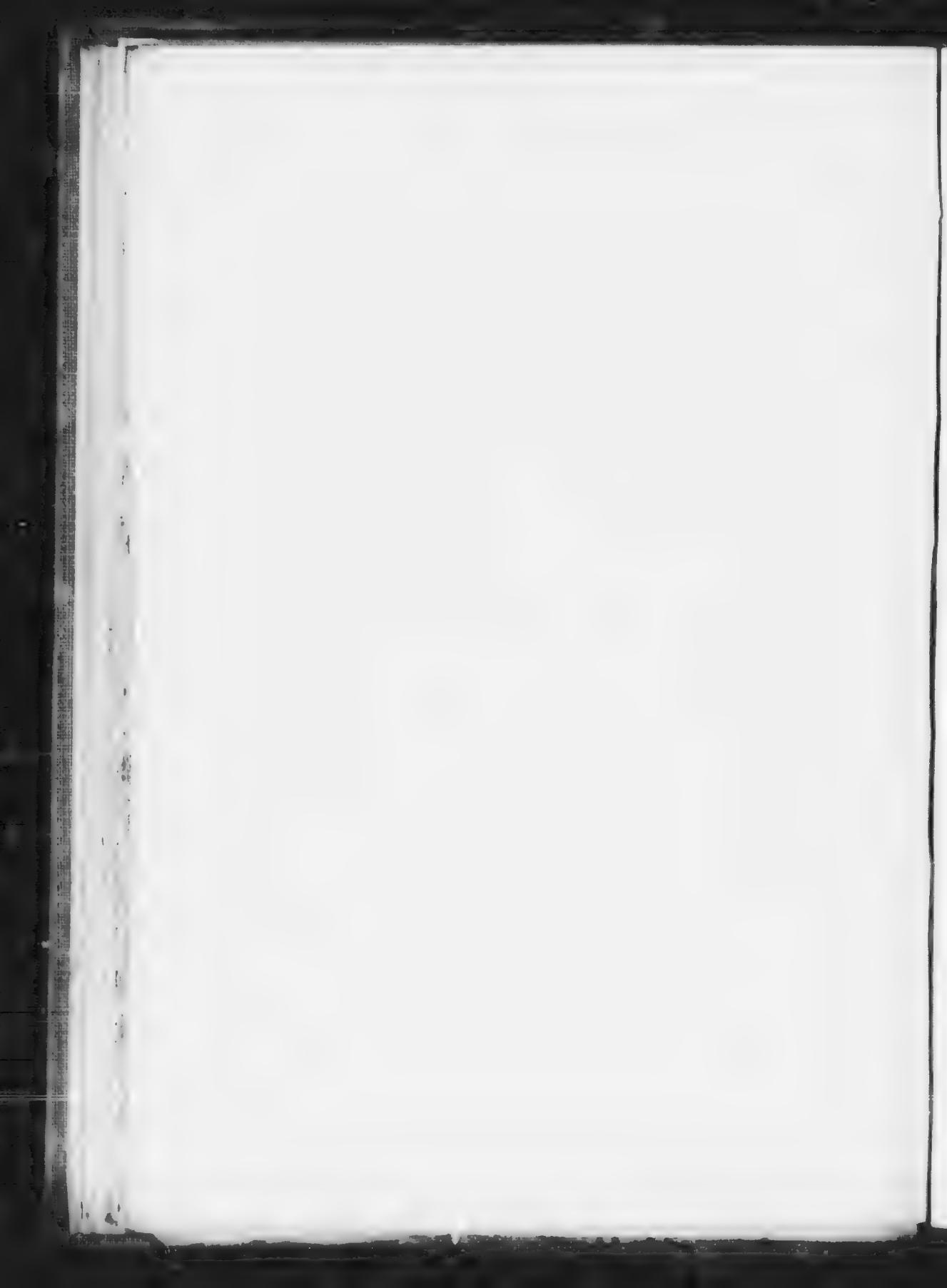
WHAT is music? The question recurs again and again. The piano is not music, nor the fingers of the player. Given the strings, the sounding-board, etc., and the artist's touch, melody is evoked. And then where does it go — this nursling of the spheres?

Music is like thought, in so far that the best is produced in a sort of subconscious way. The artist must forget himself in his rendering. Should an interruption occur that brings back to him his self-consciousness, his music suffers; his dream is broken; he feels stranded.

I have heard Garcia say that Chopin's sensitiveness was such, that when he saw a row of students waiting to hear him practise, he grew so nervous that his playing was not worth listening to. Only when he forgot his surroundings did his interpretation become sublimely poetic.



Hazlitt relates that "Whilst many men aimed at acquiring wealth, so as to buy pictures, he aimed at acquiring the knowledge and taste that enabled him to enjoy works of art more than the possessors of them."

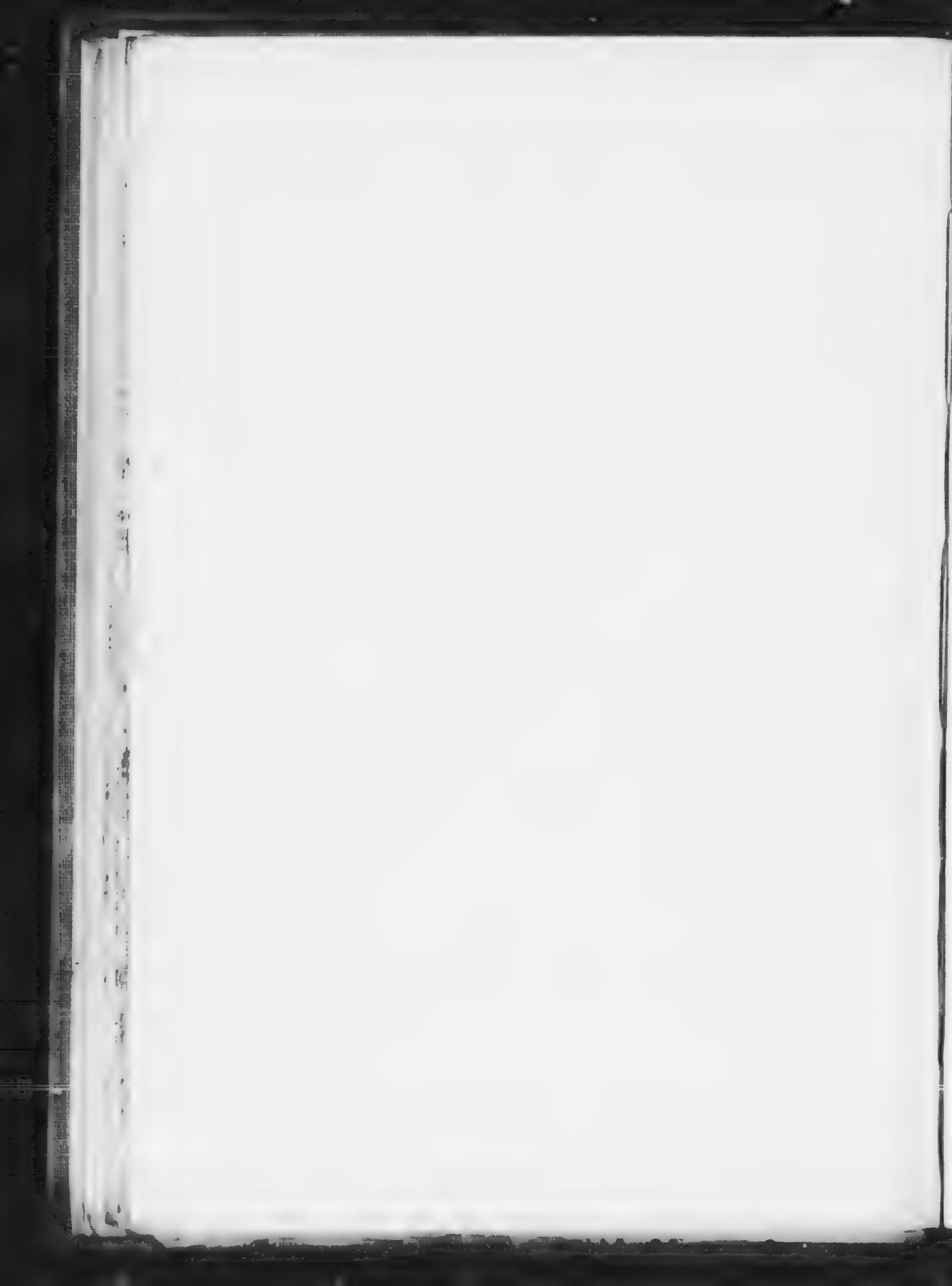


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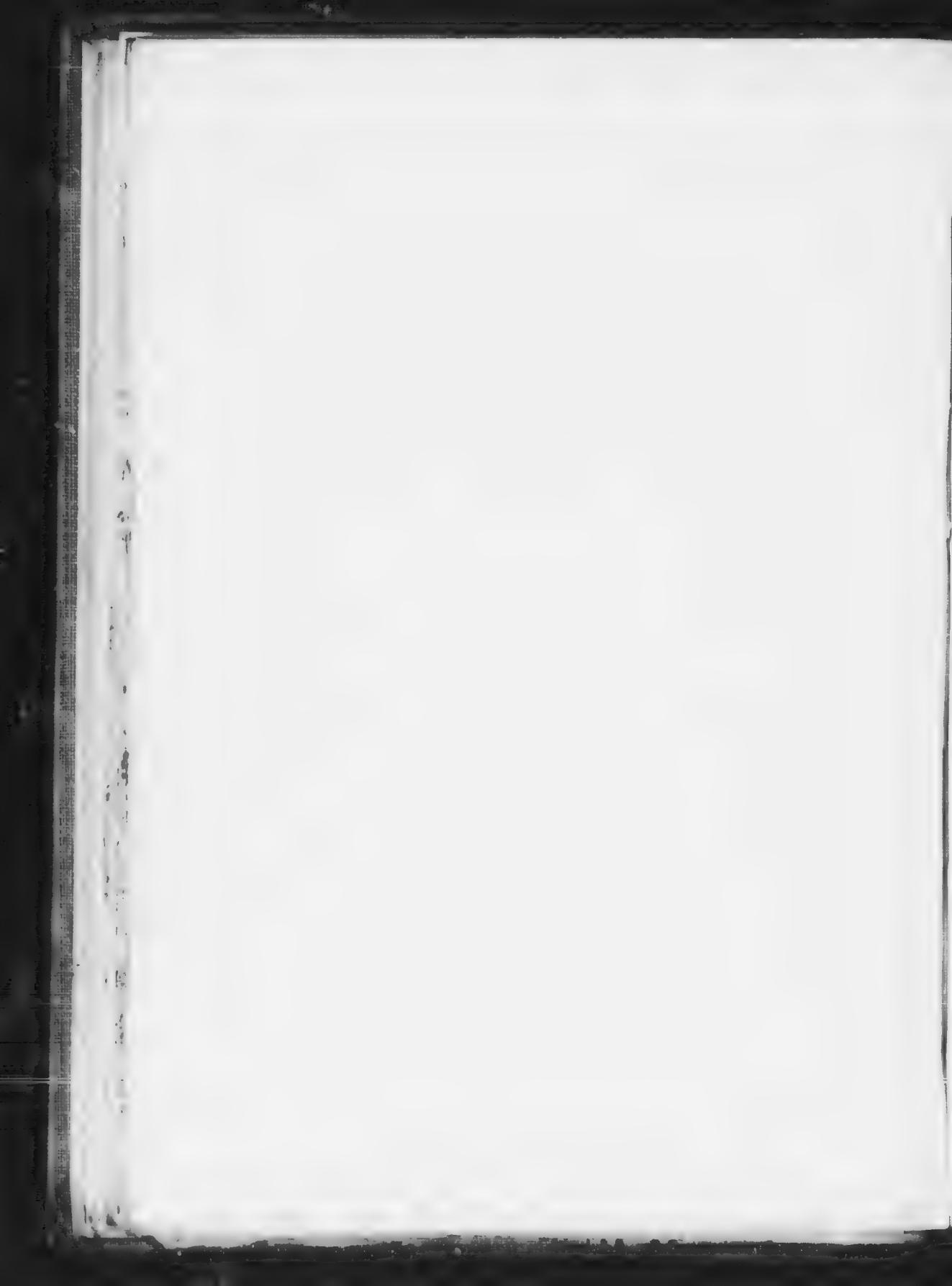
BARE, indeed, and without interest is a room, if there be nothing on the walls to occupy the mind. A pretty sketch or painting is enough to stir the imagination, and make one forget his solitude, or commonplace environment.

To gaze on the statue of the Venus de Milo in the Louvre, or on the masterpiece of painting in the Gem Gallery there, is to know what power the artist can wield in investing marble or canvas with expression.

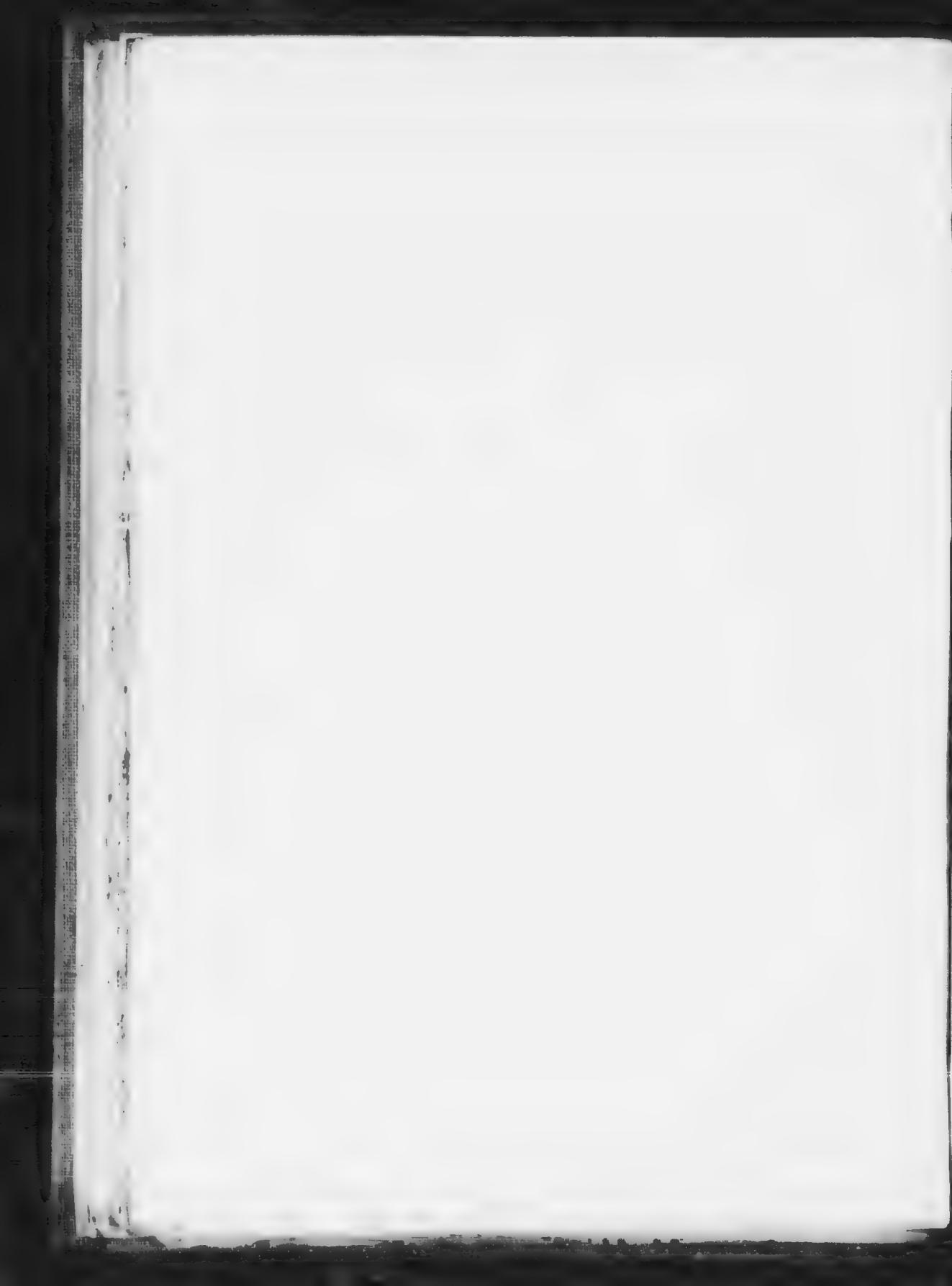
There is a beautiful truth conveyed in the legend of Pygmalion. By dwelling on our ideal, it becomes vital for us. We can imagine the marble taking shape under the artist's chisel, until, with the evolution of his idea—his creation, the poetry of life so takes possession of him as to lift him into communion with the illimitable!



ONE WHO TREADS ALONE



“ One who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted ;
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed.”



THE last time it was my privilege to spend an hour or two with the late Señor Manuel Garcia, the Spanish master of song, inventor of the laryngoscope, at his home "Mon Abri," I congratulated him on having lived over a century. His reply was : "Believe me, it is not a matter for congratulation. I hope I don't get another ten years."

The very aged, possibly, find their chief fellowships in memories of the long past. I recollect on my happening to mention the name of Chopin, Garcia conversed about the poet-artist with unusual animation, and related many incidents regarding him, as though they had happened yesterday. It appears that Chopin could not be made to understand that music could or should be paid for. "We dared not," said Garcia, "hand him the money: it had to be hidden

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away so that he would come across it sometime, and conclude that he must have left it there."

An hour with Garcia always set me wondering "What is memory"? Is it ever really lost, or only obscured, and capable of being wakened and reawakened? Given one link in the past, Garcia appeared to get at the whole chain.

Beethoven's most real fellowships were likely found in his hours of composition. The great musical genius suffered all his life from being misunderstood. We find him writing to a friend : "Hier je porte une lettre à la poste. On me demande *Où la lettre doit aller?* Je vois par là que mon écriture est peut-être mal comprise aussi souvent que moi-même."

A too great isolation, the want of human sympathy, the lack of interest in one's surroundings—the absence of some kind of fellowship, in fact—may induce a weariness of life, and a desire to escape from it, as in the case of Berlioz, who a few years

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before his death wrote : "Je suis dans ma soixante et unième année; je n'ai plus ni espoir, ni illusions, ni vastes pensées, mon fils est presque toujours loin de moi ; je suis seul; mon mépris pour l'imbécillité et l'improbité des hommes, ma haine pour leur atroce férocité, sont à leur comble, et à toute heure je dis à la mort : 'Quand tu voudras !' Qu'attend-elle donc ?"

Goethe, according to his own account, found his most real enjoyment in the companionship of his own thoughts, and in his study. We find him saying in his conversations with Eckerman, "I have ever been esteemed one of Fortune's favourites . . . yet, I may tell you, that my true happiness lay always in my poetic meditation and production."

Of Goethe it is said that his face was full of wrinkles, and that every wrinkle seemed the expression of a thought. His soul dwelt upon the heights, and he stood superior to praise or blame. His great genius reposed upon itself.



D



“The silence that is in the starry sky.”

“Beauty always dwells afar.”



WHAT a strange, weird effect a profound silence has over us—a silence when speech would seem a profanation ! Curious is it to think that during an intense stillness Nature is working just the same—the moon and the stars continue to shine, the clouds move, the wind blows. Yet all gives a sense of harmony and rest. Our imagination begins to speculate about the Power that underlies everything. We give a call, as if to be quite sure of ourselves, and perhaps some far-off echo comes back to us, with a low, flute-like voice, as though it said “I hear.”

The mysterious fellowship of Nature, in its still, midnight aspect, impressed me indescribably as I gazed on the Sphinx by moonlight. There was the vast expanse of desert-sand around ; some camels, and the Arab guides near by. Not the rustle of a

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tree, not the ripple of a rill, our footsteps inaudible.

It was noticeable that the spell which the sight of the Sphinx by moonlight cast over us travellers in no wise affected the Arabs. My guide, Mahomet, was a talos to understand what attraction was to be found in the land of the pyramids. "Me tired of Sphinx," he remarked as we were departing. "Me see Sphinx every day. Me want to go with you to London."

Like the rest of us, the Arab was convinced that beauty always dwells afar. Mahomet's remark recalled to my mind an amusing incident regarding a young Canadian, who had been born and brought up with insight of the Falls of Niagara. The youth had chanced to read Southey's description of the Falls of Lodore, and so deeply was his imagination touched by the poem, that he determined to visit the spot in order to see the remarkable falls. The summer happened to be a dry one, and he arrived under a burning sun. After a long

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search, he sat down exhausted on a ledge of rock. At last, seeing a man passing by on the road, he called out to him "How far is it to the Falls of Lodore?" The man stopped, looked up at the weary traveller, and answered, "Lor' bless you, sir, you're a-sittin' on 'em!"

Possibly we have to educate ourselves to feel the beauty and enjoy the fellowship of that which lies at our door. Certain it is that the imagination is wont to portray the "distant," the "unvisited," as under a veil of enchantment, always *couleur de rose* — a bright sun, a fairy landscape, etc. Instead of that, travellers find that there are rainy days everywhere, and that a country looks dismal when they are minus their usual comforts. The climbing of Ben Nevis by a party of tourists is recorded in the visitors' book there, in these words:—

" We climbed thy stony sides, O Ben !
We groped around thy cloudy head ;
We peered, and jeered, and swore—and then,
In sheer disgust, we went to bed ! "



HUMAN SYMPATHY



“To lie on the grass in summer noons, under breathless trees, to glide over smooth waters and watch the still shadows on tranquil shores, is happiness to me. I need then no books—then, no companion. But if to that happiness in the mere luxury of repose, I may add another happiness of a higher nature, it is in converse with some one friend, upon subjects remote from the practical workday world—subjects akin less to our active thoughts than to our dream-like reveries—subjects conjectural, speculative, fantastic, embracing not positive opinions—for opinions are things combative and disputatious—but rather those queries and guesses which start up from the farthest borderland of our reason, and lose themselves in air, as we attempt to chase and seize them.”—BULWER LYTTON.

THE half-silent fellowship of a human sympathy, we must all at some time or other have experienced. There is a sympathy too deep for words, as there is a sorrow too deep for tears. It is like the vibration of one musical string to another similar one, as though the soul said, "I am with you ; I understand."

Throughout all Nature exists this law of sympathy. That it is which constitutes friendship—perhaps the divinest of all relationships. For friendship is a soul kindship pure and simple. It is the foundation of a true marriage. It is above and beyond all things earthly : it belongs to our conception of an ideal world.

What is the sigh of the soul but the demand for higher ideals ? One writes : " I have often dreamed of a marriage which I once thought to see everywhere, but which,

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alas, I see nowhere--a marriage which would have nothing in common with the connections called marriage, which are so abundantly common. A perfectly upright, noble character—man or woman—would assuredly aim at perfect honesty and truth in the relation. I do not say that sameness of tastes would be necessary, but I think the only safe root would be that which constitutes a real friendship, where the bonds of respect and trust would form equal factors in affection's chain. Incidents must naturally arise where opinions would differ, but a frank expression of thought should unite rather than divide. The qualities that need to be cultivated are more forbearance and charity and large-mindedness, and, above all, self-control.

“Contrast this with the alliances that we see every day, where expediency from a financial or from a social point of view form the first considerations, and then wonder if you can that the divorce courts are kept so busy.”

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The tender companionship of family life is often too little appreciated. Take for instance the mother—the very type of unselfishness. She gives all and suffers all without complaint. Yet, in return, she may not receive even ordinary gratitude. The beauty of her affection which was ever present, has not been seen. Her anxious care was taken as a matter of course. She was the sympathetic, ever-ready comforter. Who took thought that she ever stood in need of consideration? Her gentle presence has too frequently passed away before its real value has been recognized.

The Powers of Light and Love surely see to the heart of things, and the recording angels somewhere, sometime, shall declare the Book of Life.

What a sense of peace and comfort comes to us with the belief that there are some we can trust : it gives a different outlook on humanity. Even the presence of one noble character in a room has an influence on the whole company. Then each person wishes

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to appear at his best : all are ennobled, for the time being at least. One cannot help speculating as to what life would be if each were true to the best in him. Were each to endeavour to live up to his highest thought, it is probable that more would be accomplished for the progress of humanity than by all the societies of one kind and another in existence.

Do we not ask ourselves why it is that there is so little of the ideal ? Have we not some reason to say : if all be chance, it is a wonder things are so well as they are ; if there be no chance, it is strange that things are not better !

As giving in few words a generally accepted view of life, I have heard quoted the following lines :—

“ La vie est brève,
 Un peu d'amour,
 Un peu de rêve,
 Et puis—bonjour !

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La vie est vaine !
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de haine,
Et puis—bonsoir ! ”

LÉON DE MONTENÆKEN.

“ Ah, life is vain,
Love sheds its ray,
Hate hath its reign,
And then—good-day !

Life is a gleam—
Hope soon takes flight—
A fitful dream,
And then—good-night ! ”

Translated by MARY MORGAN.

Tout passe it is true, but it sounds less pessimistic to say *tout change*. Let us trust that with the passage of Time, hate becomes transformed into love, and that Hope grows with the ages.

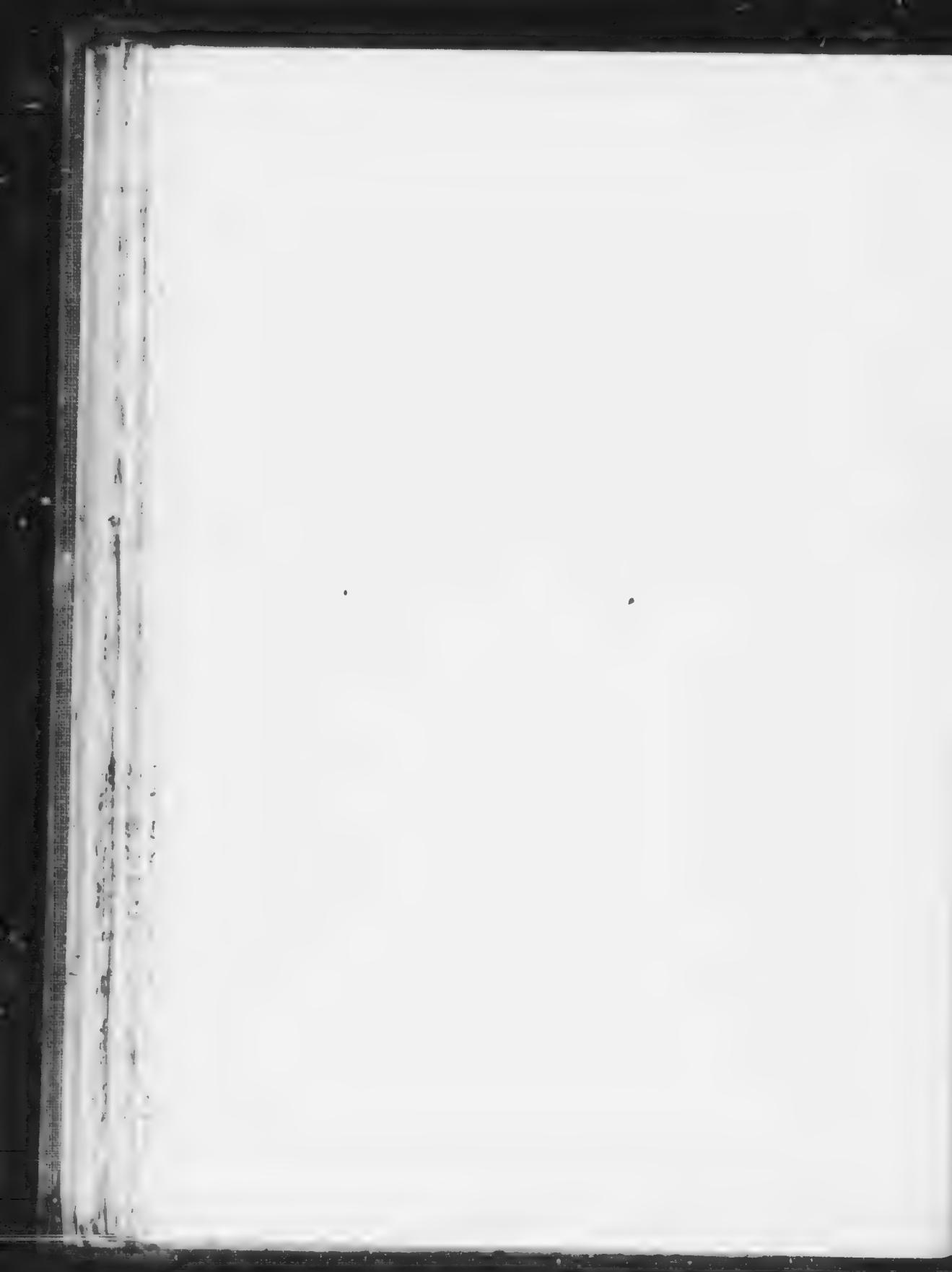


D^Y DREAMS



I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores,
I change but I cannot die.”—SHELLEY.

“The thought of death never gives me any uneasiness. I am on need that our spirit is of a nature indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity to eternity.”—GOETHE.



I HAVE ever been enamoured of that pretty conceit of the Greeks—the having one word for the soul and a butterfly—*Psyche*.

That everything is in a state of flux ; that there is continuity through transformation ; that the elements have the power of passing one into the other ; that, in short, the death of one form simply means the birth of a different phase of being—such is our attitude to-day toward the universe.

Psyche — the soul, or a butterfly ! I chanced to be pondering this subject as I sat at my window one morning at the Quirinal Hotel, Rome. The solemn music of “The Dead March in Saul,” and the sound of a passing funeral procession made me look out. Just below was a hearse covered with flowers, and on each side of it walked rows

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of priests, carrying long lighted candles. Suddenly, from the flower-covered bier, I saw what appeared to be a yellow leaf—as of a daffodil—mount upon the breeze and float over the whole line of the *cortége*. As my eyes continued to watch the supposed drifting petal, it all at once took an upward direction and entered my window. “A real butterfly!” I exclaimed. It was the first of the season probably, for this was February 23rd. A pretty coincidence! It pleased my fancy to imagine a human soul quitting the earth on outspread wings, and I thanked the Greeks for their symbol of Psyche.

Our day-dreams are our silent companions, leading us, helping us. Whence come they? Whither go they? They are the feelers after light and truth; and, profiting by the new ideas that each day brings, they waft us onward.

How we think, remains a puzzle. Our ideas may be compared to the *Aurora borealis*—always shifting their place.

The question of “What we shall be,”

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haunts the meditative mind. Admitting that, at the present time, we know absolutely nothing concerning the *Beyond*, still there remains for us an unlimited field for reasonable inquiry. After rooting out prejudices and worn superstitions, we cannot help asking ourselves—What becomes of the imponderable element—the intellect, the affections, the soul-life?

Science asserts that nothing is lost. Surely, therefore, there is ground for a healthy optimism regarding the continuity of the finer elements of being.

“ Still seems it strange that thou should’st live
for ever ?

Is it less strange that thou should’st live at all ?
This is a miracle ; and that no more.”

[*Night Thoughts.*]

Heraclitus taught the interchangeability of the elements, and science to-day seems to have reached the borderland—and borderlands are hard to define—where matter becomes so subtle as to suggest the thought, that the investigations of the near

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future may throw light on the domain of mind or spirit.

No doubt there are multitudes of prosaic persons satisfied to let things remain as they are, and to disparage the quest for farther knowledge. It was one of these who, after listening to some scientific speculations, put the question to Faraday: "But what's the use of it all?" Faraday turned quickly on the questioner and asked, "What's the use of a baby?"

One discovery is just the stepping-stone to the next one. Consider the ship on which Columbus set out, and compare it with the magnificent vessels which traverse the oceans to-day!

The present balloon is but a baby in relation to the ships that in the near future will navigate the air.

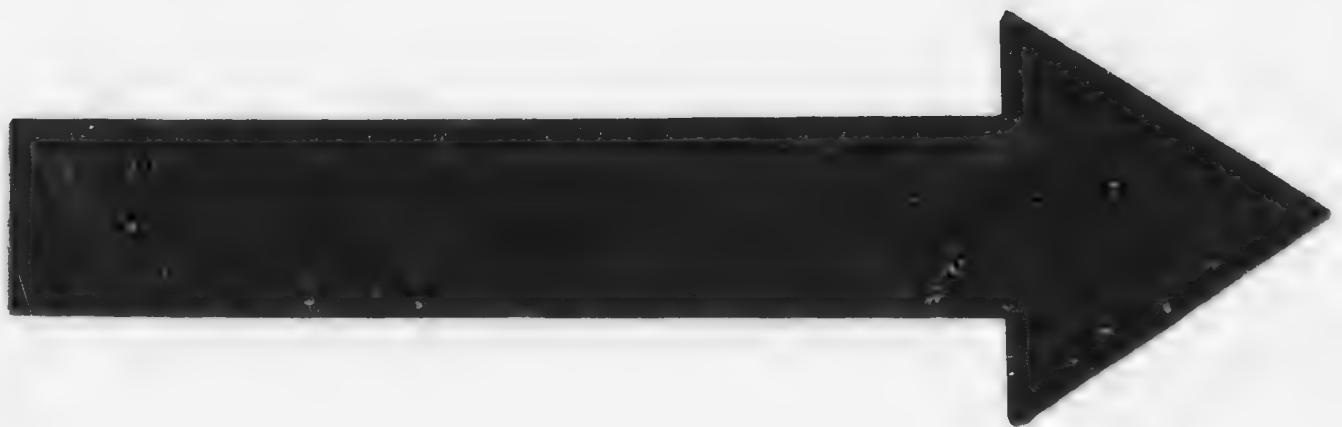
It is announced that a new planet is discovered far out beyond Neptune. Of course the planet is not new, but we have just become aware of its existence. We are a little less ignorant than we were.

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This century looks upon a different foreground, a higher plane, an advanced era. The night-clouds of superstition are flying fast away. There is not a breeze but whispers, "Onward and despair not," for the spirit of progress is immortal. Listen to the promptings of your day-dreams, which constitute for you a mysteriously creative fellowship, through which the Powers Most High work. As I somewhere recently read :—

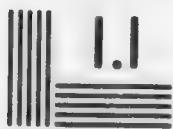
"Nature is for ever emitting a pleasant irony at our scale of values, trying to tell us that it is not that which endures, but that which is transformed, that best answers her equitable purpose. . . . He (man) is so afraid of the divine processes and so blind to the glory of going on, that he tries to petrify his own perishing body when the life is out of it. Never does he show himself such a dog in the manger as when he embalms himself."

With the realization that life and death are one, pessimism bids fair to be driven



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out by optimism. No longer shall men say, " Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die ; " but rather—Live worthily to-day, that we may be worthy to live to-morrow.*

* The materialistic outlook of the Neapolitan peasant is quaint :—

" Amice, alliegre magnammo e bevimmo,
Nun che n'ce stace noglio a la lucerna :
Chi sa l'antro munno ne'e vedimmo ?
Chi sa s'a l'antro munno n'ce taverna ? "

which might be translated thus :—

" Come, friends ! drink merrily and eat,
While in your lamps is oil to spare :
Who knows if we in Heaven shall meet ?
Who knows—if taverns be there ? "

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TAKE JOY HOME

“Take joy home

And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her.
Then will she come and often sing to thee
When thou art working in the furrows ; ay,
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad—
Joy is the grace we say to God.”

JEAN INGELOW.

A BEAUTIFUL myth assuredly is that of the first ray of morning awaking the statue of Memnon, so that it gave forth a sweet sound, as though it said, "Rejoice! for a new day comes."

Take joy home! A sunny disposition is a boon companion. Through its influence, what heights are scaled, what abysses bridged over! In the words of an eminent physician: "Avoid giving in to any morbid tendency. Switch your mind on to a loop line, and let the foe pass by." The Irishman put his practical philosophy in a nutshell when he strove to comfort his disconsolate brother with the advice: "Be aisy, Pat, be aisy; but if ye can't be aisy, be as aisy as ye can!"

One thought has power to dispel another. In the case of an inevitable sorrow or loss, over which the mind would brood

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uselessly and with pain, it is well to remember that by a persistent effort of the will we can substitute other subjects for reflection, and divert our reveries into healthier channels.

Oftentimes comfort is derived from considering that a short interval of time frequently causes us to regard matters in a totally different light, so that after the lapse of a few weeks, or months, or years, as the case may be, things that once appeared of vital importance assume an aspect ridiculously trivial. Our lives would gain immensely in peacefulness were there less strain after appearances, less emulation. Society is so given over to its luxuries and rivalries, and the accumulation of possessions, that, as Emerson observed, "*Things have got into the saddle, and are riding mankind.*" Yet all the while thinking persons are fully aware that appearances are not worth living for, that the artificial is bound to go under, whilst realities are beyond everything precious. Would that

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our lives comprised more of the real fellowships, which mean everything and exact nothing ; would that our homes harboured souls brave enough to stand for what they are ; would that men might cultivate that breadth of charity and sympathy which would makethem one with all thechildren of earth who are struggling towards their highest aspirations.

We hear it said that humour is dying out. A pity 'tis, if this be true. There is nothing so infectious as a hearty laugh ; nothing better for sweeping the cobwebs from the brain ; no better tonic for the entire human system.

Should the Muse desert us, can we wonder ? Who finds time in these days of hurry and turmoil, to saunter in the meadows and listen to the skylark ? Who is able to find at hand the quiet nook which permits him to forget the madding crowd and give his mind to contemplation ?

The tender fellowship that ought to exist among families and friends is often

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marred by a rigid insistence on the observation of old time customs and regulations, which have no *raison d'être* for us to-day. That which hinders progress unspeakably, is the slowness with which we divest ourselves of habits of thought which have no more meaning to us, being obviously false. A well-known author says : "At present there is not a single credible established religion in the world." The era predicted by Herbert Spencer is with us. Less time is given to the study of theology, and more to science and ethics.

The rational use of the Sunday is a great step forward. Schopenhauer referring to "Le Repos du dimanche," said : "Les Européens travaillent six jours la semaine pour avoir le droit de s'ennuyer le septième. Cela, c'est le dimanche Anglo-Saxon."

Elsewhere we read : "Les races laborieuses ont grand' peine à supporter l'oisiveté. Ce fut un coup de maître de l'instinct Anglais de sanctifier le dimanche

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dans les masses et de le rendre ennuyeux pour elles, à tel point que l'Anglais aspire inconsciemment à son travail de la semaine.”

In William Black's novel, entitled *In Far Lochaber*, we find the following : “ In former years every house-window in Kirk o' Shields, as in most other Scotch towns, had its blinds drawn down all day long on the Sabbath, as a matter of ordinary decorum ; but this observance has now almost entirely disappeared.”

A grace before meals is an observance that is passing away. Charles Lamb thinks its origin must have been in the early times of the world, when dinners were precarious things, and remarks : “ It is not otherwise easy to be understood why the blessing of food should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it. . . . Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said be-

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fore reading the *Faery Queen*? . . . After a devotional tone put on for a few seconds, how rapidly the speaker will fall into his common voice, helping himself or his neighbour, as if to get rid of some uneasy sensation of hypocrisy."

A custom—now almost obsolete—was the use of D.V. in letter-writing. The habit was too trivial to form a bone of contention, yet its disappearance may be accepted without regret. The old-fashioned D.V. has been superseded by "weather permitting."

When all is said, however, let us accept the fact—for it is a fact—that there is a malady of the soul that will not be ignored. A difference of temperament, or race, or ideals, etc., etc., will create distances between persons—even of the same family. There is somewhat which may be "felt," that will not be defined, and yet cannot be explained away: for each heart "knoweth its own bitterness," and the sigh of the soul is inaudible.

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So much is written of the pleasures of youth, that one could almost be led to conclude that the rest of life was hardly worth living. Yet much might be said in praise of the beauty and joy of mature age. How frequently do we meet with the attractive grandeur of intellectual and spiritual attainment, coupled with the silvery hair of experience; and coupled also with a philosophy and sweetness and sobriety, that rarely exist in impetuous youth. I asked one day of one now well-advanced in years: "Are you as happy—as interested in life—as you were in the Past of which you speak?" The answer was: "Happier: I survey calmly; and I have learnt what is most worth having. The Autumn of life I find to be the best time of all."

It was a pretty fancy of Swedenborg's that the good spirits in the "Beyond" continually grow young.

Take joy home! In order to do this, we must keep our faculties alive to their highest standard of activity. To settle in

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a groove is to court a vegetable existence. As the Japanese proverb has it: "The frog in the well knows not the great ocean."

Nor is it worth while to lose time in retaliation. Remember, "it is the offender who never pardons." Better forget the offender and the offence, and pass on in your own independent path. Enough that you can choose the ennobling fellowship of Nature, the arts, books, and all congenial human companionship, and that your endeavour is to help others to do the same.

Should to-day be bare of interest and dark, consider that at any moment the clouds may break, and transform your entire world—a new helpful idea will make sunlight in the soul—a welcome friend may be on the way to you—a letter of good tidings may be arriving. Forget not that your own "self" may be stirred by all the life outside of it.

Sit apart betimes and do some independent thinking. There come such diffi-

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cult moments when we would fain consult the wise and experienced, but which we must decide alone. With the advance of civilization the oracles have fled, and we are left to depend on our own intelligence. It is necessary to continually rejuvenate ourselves, in order to keep in touch with the onward-flowing tide, for, to lose the power of adaptability, means to crystallize and disappear. Fear not the heights, however solitary they may seem :

“ Make of thy life a poem beautiful.
Thy soul is thine own dwelling ; keep it pure.”

BOOKS

“ My books have been my friends. I have lived
with them. They have gathered my tears.”

E. M. T.

TO linger in a library is like sauntering in a garden—there is variety and beauty—a something to suit any time and any mood. Books, like flowers, never intrude: they are always awaiting our pleasure. Often we hesitate what volume to open—there seems such an *embarras de richesses*.

For the cast-down spirit Bulwer Lytton said there was no medicine like the reading of biography. On this topic he descants so delightfully, that I cannot refrain from quoting a paragraph:—

“ When you think, because heaven has denied you this or that on which you had set your heart, that all your life must henceforth be a blank—oh! then diet yourself well on the biography of good and great men. See how little a space one sorrow really makes in life. See scarce a

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page perhaps given to some grief similar to your own, and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it ! You thought the wing was broken ! It was but a bruised feather. See what life leaves behind it when all is done ! A summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and suffering, linking themselves with the being of the world.”

Schopenhauer—pessimist though he was—never wearies of dilating upon the nature of that true joy which is a serious thing—the joy born of thought and intellectual beauty. Well might such joy be likened to the sunlight of the soul !

By keeping ourselves alive to the blessings of life on its retired side, as well as on the arena of action, the daily path becomes less rugged. We discover that we have resources within ourselves which must be cultivated, if life is not to be deprived of its most precious fellowship.

Surely it is time that we had a higher standard of recreation—of theatrical en-

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ertainment, of music, of fiction, and, might we say, of manners!

The "pleasures of life," as they are called, are so associated with what is material, sensational, demonstrative, and spectacular, that we cannot wonder if thoughtful persons to-day, are not satisfied with prevailing social conditions. The life of the future will assuredly demand higher ideals. Well would it be if we could alternate the uplifting fellowship of good books with the stimulating fellowship of cultured society!

What has become of the *salon*? It once held a unique place, giving facilities for poets, artists, authors, scientists, politicians, etc., to meet and compare ideas in ways as pleasant as profitable. At these genial gatherings conversation deserved the name. Society, as at present constituted, has nothing to recommend it. The fact is, the sage—meaning, according to the Stoics, "the serious person," has no place in it.

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Considering the spread of education and the many advantages which this century offers, one might anticipate a *salon* of even greater power and influence than that of the past. To form a centre where serious persons could meet without undue ceremony, and have the opportunity of conversing on topics of mutual interest, would seem a worthy aim for the cultured women of the period. The more enlightened the world becomes, the more shall there be a free interchange of ideas as well as of commodities, so that the formula of the *gamin de Paris* :

“ Donne-moi d’quoi qu’t’a,
J’té donnerai d’quoi qu’jai.”

will apply equally to the intellectual as to the material universe.

Along with the more philosophic conception of being at which the world is arriving, humanity will feel itself ever nearer to the heart of Nature. Man will see with deeper insight the loveliness of

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its bloom, the enchantment of its colour, and will inhale with each breath the fragrance and freshness of Spring. He will ponder the mysteries that surround him, with reverence and awe, in the modest spirit of the truth-seeker, and will trust the fellowship of his own soul as being the inspirer and guide to the higher heights. He will grow oblivious to the semblance of decay, and forget that he ever dreamed it. Thus may he attain to that divine calm which has its roots in a reasonable hope and trust, and, as he closes his eyes to earth, he may say in the words of Mrs Barbauld :—

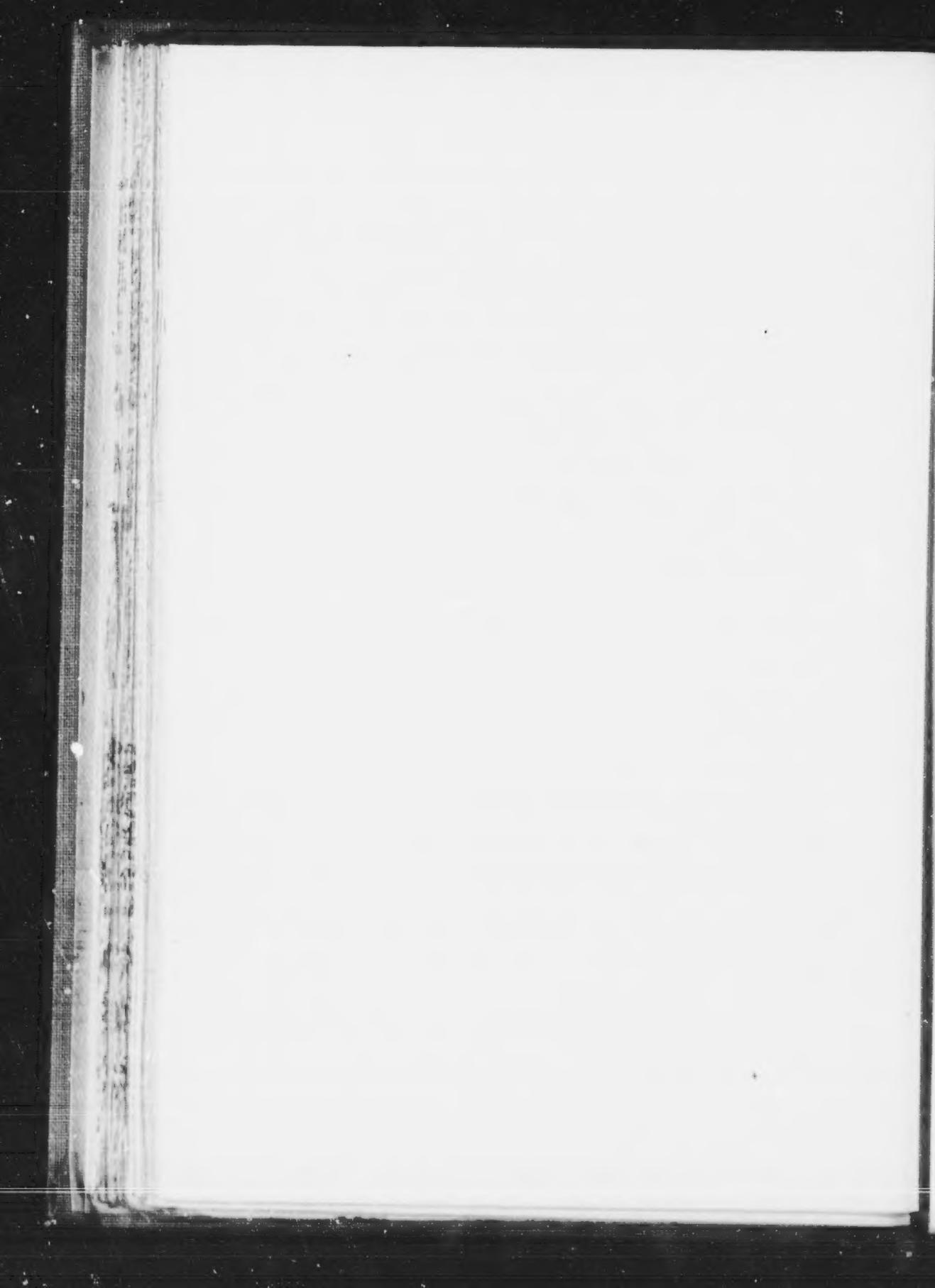
“ Life, we’ve been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather ;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear :
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear ;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time ;
Say not good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good-morning.”



CONCLUSION

“ My brother the wind, and my
sister the rain.”

ST FRANCIS OF ASSIST.



EXTRACT from the poem of PRINCE
ZERBINO,—*The Garden of Poetry*:
LUDWIG TIECK. [Born at Berlin,
1773. The Romantic School.]

The Wood.—

“Come, mortal, come, thy sorrow leave,
Seek restful ease in shades like these,
Among the brotherhood of trees.

Each for himself ; we oaks, and firs, and beeches,
Stand interlaced and massed, yet each is free ;
And none his brethren scorns, or overreaches ;
All bud and branch in broad-armed liberty.
One points to heaven ; another, downward
tending,
Shades with wide hands the grass—each hath
his part,
When play the winds, yet all, together blending,
Send one vast anthem from the forest’s heart.
And so with men,—so diverse and so parted—
Some gnarled and earthward, some that seek
the height,
Yet to the wise they utter, single-hearted,
One motherspeech—aceaseless prayer for light.”

The Wild Flowers.—

“O friend, who passest by,
And never seest

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How fair the grass doth in its lustre lie—
Its blades, with cooling dew, how kind they are ;
While down between looks love from every star ;
Why choose the least,
Losing the greatest love that waits thee nigh ?
Why think that beauty always lies afar ?”

The Sky.—

“ These I love
To cool with kindly airs, and from above
Gaze deep down on them, gazing up at me,
Blessed from the depths of my aërial sea.
The clouds they come—they pass, they flee away,
Playing throughout my realms their phantom
play,
And wave or fly like Autumn forest-leaves.
But in the glory morn or sunset weaves
Are hues more bright than e'er by flowers were
worn—
More grand the vapours, tempest-piled or torn,
The rapturous lightning and the rainbow brave—
More dazzling yet those flaming seas that lave
With crimson cloud-waves all that cloudland
shore,
Where golden sunset ebbs when day is o'er.”

Goddess.—

“ And earth's reality is but the shadow
And feeble copy of their pure ideal.”

